

Message Text

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QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L UDORN 052

E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJECT: BIOGRAPHIC NOTE - KHUNTHONG PHUPHIUDUAN, DEPUTY MINISTER
OF EDUCATION

1. SUMMARY. KHUNTHONG PHUPHIUDUAN, THE NEWLY APPOINTED DEPUTY
MINISTER OF EDUCATION, IS A DEMOCRAT FROM KALASIN PROVINCE. BORN
MAY 3, 1927 INTO A FARMING FAMILY, HE WORKED DILIGENTLY TO
BECOME A TEACHER WHILE AT THE SAME TIME TAKING A LAW DEGREE. HE
IS A RELATIVE NEWCOMER TO POLITICS, ENTERING THE RING JUST SIX
YEARS AGO. HE LIVES MODESTLY AND HAS A REPUTATION FOR HONESTY.

2. KHUTHONG WAS BORN IN BAN KHOK, YANG TALAT DISTRICT, KALASIN.
HE STUDIED AT THE YANG TALAT PRIMARY SCHOOL FOR THE FIRST FOUR
YEARS AND THEN TRANSFERED TO THE PROVINCIAL SECONDARY SCHOOL,
PHITHAYA, LOCATED IN KALASIN CITY, WHERE HE FINISHED TENTH GRADE
IN 1944. FOLLOWING THAT HE CONTINUED ON AT THE MAHASARAKHAM
TEACHERS COLLEGE AND WAS AWARDED A PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHING
CERTIFICATE IN 1947. LATER ON, WHILE WORKING AS A TEACHER, HE
PASSED THE EXAMINATIONS AND EARNED A SPECIAL CERTIFICATE TO
TEACH AT THE SECONDARY AND PRE-UNIVERSITY LEVELS. IN LATER
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YEARS HE TOOK EXTENSION COURSES FROM THAMMASAT AND WAS AWARDED

A LAW DEGREE IN 1964.

3. FROM 1947, WHEN HE GRADUATED FROM MAHASARAKHAM, UP TO 1969, KHUNTHONG WAS INVOLVED IN TEACHING. HE SPENT 20 YEARS TEACHING IN SMALL REMOTE SCHOOLS IN KALASIN UNTIL 1967, WHEN HE WAS PROMOTED TO PROVINCIAL EDUCATION INSPECTOR. TWO YEARS LATER HE RESIGNED TO BEGIN HIS POLITICAL CAREER.

4. IN 1969 KHUNTHONG RAN FOR MP AS A DEMOCRAT CANDIDATE, AND AMONG 47 CANDIDATES PLACED THIRD HIGHEST, TO GAIN ONE OF KALASIN'S FOUR SEATS. IN THAT ELECTION KHUNTHONG WAS ONE OF NINE DEMOCRATS ELECTED THROUGHOUT THE NORTHEAST. OUT OF THESES, KHUNTHONG, SOMPHORN CHURIMAT OF ROI-ET AND BUNKERD HIRANYAKHAM OF CHAIYAPHUM WEROBNUUNTED MEMBERS OF THE DEMOCRAT PARTY'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

5. KHUNTHONG SERVED AS MP UNTIL THE NEC COUP IN 1971. HE THEN RETURNED TO KALASIN AND BECAME A BUILDING CONTRACTOR, WORKING IN A PRIVATE CAPACITY UNTILBKUURM THE MAJORITY OF HIS CONTRACTS, WHICH CAME FROM THE PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE, WERE TO BUILD SCHOOLS IN REMOTE AREAS. DURING THIS TIME, KHUNTHONG DID NOT MAINTAIN A PERMANENT WORK FOFK, RATHER HE EMPLOYED LOCAL PEOPLE FROM THE VILLAGE IN WHICH THE SCHOOL WAS BEING BUILT.

6. AFTER OCTOBER 14, 1973, KHUNTHONG WAS AGAIN APPOINTED TO THE DEMOCRAT'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, ALONG WITH SOMPHORN CHURIMAT. SOMPHORN LATER SPLIT WITH KHUNTHONG AND JOINED THE SOVEREIGNTY PARTY, LEAVING KHUNTHONG AS THE SENIOR DEMOCRAT IN THE NORTHEAST. (SOMPHORN DID NOT RUN FOR REELECTION.) KHUNTHONG PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN ORGANIZING THE PARTY CO9*9,:3 -5 5#3 (9 - #953), KHON KAEN, ON JULY 6, 1974, WHICH DREW OVER 300 SUPPORTERS AND PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATES FROM THE UPPER PROVINCES OF THE NORTHEAST. PARTY LEADERS JOURNEYED FROM BANGKOK TO SPEAK, AND AT THE END, KHUNTHONG WAS GIVEN RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHOOSING THE PARTY'S CANDIDATES FOR THE NORTHEAST.

7. KHUNTHONG IS A RESPECTED KALASIN POLITICIAN. MANY REFER TO HIM AS "TEACHER THONG" AND HE CAN OFTEN BE SEEN SHIRTLESS IN FRONT OF HIS MODEST HOME TALKING TO VILLAGERS. ALTHOUGH HE HAS CONFIDENTIAL

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A LAW DEGREE, HE HAS REFUSED TO PARCTICE, SAYING THAT HE DID NOT WANT TO CREATE ENEMIES AMONG THOSE WHO MIGHT LOSE TO HIM.

8. KHUNTHONG HAS NINE CHILDREN--INCLUDING SIX GIRLS. HE ALSO SUFFERS FROM AN EYE AFFLICTION WHICH CAUSES HIS LEFT EYE TO REMAIN PARTIALLY CLOSED MOST OF THE TIME.
BIEGGLOW UNQUOTE
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